

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated December 1, 2008, claim 54 is rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph. Claims 1-6, 9, 34, 41, and 52-55 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a). For the reasons set forth hereinafter, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant's invention as set forth in the claims is particularly pointed out and distinctly claimed and, further, includes features which are not taught or suggested by the cited references taken in the combination posed by the Examiner. Reconsideration is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Although the Office Action summary indicates that claims 56-59 are rejected and indeed the Examiner provides specific reasons for the obviousness of Applicant's invention as set forth in claims 56-59, claims 56-59 are not specifically rejected under 35 USC § 103(a). However, in view of the Examiner's comments in the Office Action, it is presumed by the Applicant that claims 56-59 are also rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cohen in view of Jenkins and Knudson.

Claim 54 is rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph. Accordingly, claim 54 has been amended to provide antecedent basis for the feature specifically noted by the Examiner in the Office Action.

Claims 1-6, 9, 34, 41, 52-55, and 56-59 as discussed above, are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cohen in view of Jenkins and Knudson. With respect to claim 1, the Examiner contends that Cohen teaches online collaboration for a task and the capability for the collaboration to be used for a plurality of online tasks. The Examiner contends that one of ordinary skill in the art can use Cohen for managing one or more projects.

Further, the Examiner specifically notes that Cohen does not explicitly recite defining authorized users for a task. The Examiner cites Jenkins for teaching a transaction and collaborative management application and the concept of defining authorized users for a task. From this, the Examiner concludes that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Cohen by adopting the teachings of Jenkins to secure access to sensitive project information.

The Examiner further contends that Cohen in view of Jenkins does not explicitly recite a plurality of tasks in a project. The Examiner cites Knudson for teaching a concept of a plurality of tasks in a project and concludes that it would have been obvious to modify Cohen in view of Jenkins by adopting the teachings of Knudson to organize and control a plurality of tasks in a project.

Finally, the Examiner contends that Cohen in view of Jenkins and Knudson teaches the capability for an interactive method for managing at least one project which includes the other steps set forth in claim 1.

However, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 1, and the claims depending from claim 1, includes features which are not suggested by the cited references as interpreted by the Examiner.

Briefly, Cohen is a software tool which relates to an issue or task and is intended to create a document relating to the issue or task. Co-located individuals can interact in the issue or task. The tool allows the users to view activity history, the workflow of the data object of the task, and to simultaneously use the data objects in the task.

However, it is clear that Cohen teaches a system that is not a complete project system, but rather a method to track an issue or a task much the same way as Applicant's task master control in one of the information modules in Applicant's method. Cohen uses a sharing system to share documents involved in the issue, but lacks interconnectivity to post status statement or summaries or any other responsibilities of the task members.

Jenkins describes an issue, item or matter management system in a document and is most pertinent to legal firms or other firms with clients as the information is organized by client heading and then by matters and items that are being worked on for that client. Jenkins has authorized users, document attachments and simple status statements for a matter and the ability to filter a data view to see all of the "hot" matters. However, the status of the matter in Jenkins is only in a simplistic sense in that it may be only "hot", "in progress" or "done".

Knudson is a project tool which integrates with a project plan and cascades to tasks to support the completion of the project plan. Knudson is simply a project planning and an analysis tool which does not have the ability to attach documents, has no work flow functionality, and no collaborative or information sharing abilities.

It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness in support of a rejection of Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 1, and the claims depending therefrom, based on any permissible combination and interpretation of Cohen, Jenkins, and Knudson. Cohen, Jenkins and Knudson fail to teach or suggest any collaboration center formed as one of a plurality of information modules which control and share information. The collaboration center is defined by the Applicant in claim 1 as being accessible only by collaboration approved individuals to facilitate the resolution of at least one project issue or project problem.

Collaboration, when invoked by Applicant's method, creates a sub team within the overall project team of collaboration approved individuals who have access to and who can participate in the collaboration. Further, the collaboration is directed to one project issue or project problem within the scope of the overall project and typically relates to a problem or issue with a task, goal, and/or object in the overall project.

Applicant's method also stores all of the information associated in the collaboration center or module thereby providing a central point of collaboration information which may be accessed by any of the collaboration approved individuals.

Any task management method taught by Cohen, Jenkins, or Knudson is directed to a single task without any reference to an overall project or, is related to the tasks of a project necessary to achieve the project goal or object. These project tasks differ in functionality from the Applicant's collaboration center which is directed to a project issue or project problem and thus constitutes a sub-project within the overall project hierarchy. Only collaboration approved individuals of the overall project approved individuals can be selected to participate in a specific collaboration.

Cohen, Jenkins and Knudson also fail to disclose a collaboration which provides at least one of a text based collaboration summary and a text based collaboration status statement in combination with a collaboration leader, a collaboration topic, and a collaboration status.

Thus, Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 1 uniquely defines a collaboration center which allows a collaboration sub-team to address one of a project issue or project problem as a sub-team within the overall organization of the project including individual collaboration-related tasks that are also presented as normal or higher level project tasks.

The cited references treat each task as a new project that would have to be created. This new project will require users to log in and check information in the one project as well as all other active projects to determine which tasks have been assigned to the individual as well as the overall status of each "project or task".

Since the Examiner has not identified any collaboration center in either Cohen, Jenkins or Knudson which is capable of defining at least one collaboration associated with one project, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness to support a rejection of Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 1, as well as all of the claims depending from and including all of the features of claim 1.

With specific attention to claim 4, Applicant further defines his method as allowing votes by authorized individuals for the collaboration issue and making a decision by the project leader. The Examiner admits that Cohen in view of Jenkins and Knudson does not explicitly teach accepting votes of authorized individuals for the issue. The Examiner states, however then it is old and known in business meetings that team leaders solicit votes from authorized team members to make an educated decision, gauge popularity of opinions, etc.

However, it is respectfully submitted that any votes which may have taken place in business meetings is done concurrently as part of the meeting and not in a time disjointed matter as is Applicant's project and, specifically, a collaboration within the scope of the project. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of

obviousness to support a rejection of Applicant's invention defined in claim 4 by any combination of Cohen, Jenkins and Knudson.

With respect to claim 5, the Examiner contends that Cohen in view of Jenkins and Knudson teaches the capability for maintaining and displaying a summary of all collaborations.

However, it is respectfully submitted that Cohen, Jenkins and Knudson fail to teach or suggest any type of summary, collaboration status and collaboration status statement of each collaboration as set forth by the Applicant in claim 5 which depends from and includes all of the features of Applicant's invention defined in claim 1.

Thus, it is submitted that Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 5 patentably defines over the cited references in its own right, in addition to its dependency from and the reasons stated above for claim 1.

Regarding claim 9, the Examiner contends that Cohen in view of Jenkins and Knudson teaches all the features of Applicant's invention. The Examiner also states that grouping emails based on the content of subject line, and storing emails based on user-id (one of ordinary skill assigns a project name as a user-id) is old and known technology.

However, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness in support of this rejection by any possible combination of the teachings of Cohen, Jenkins, and Knudson. The cited references teach email notification to users in only a unidirectional manner from the sender to the recipient. Such references fail to disclose the bi-directional email interaction set forth by Applicant in claim 9. The references lack any electronic mail response capability for a request and notification which allows an authorized user to respond to the requested notification by direct electronic mail reply.

Thus, Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 9 is submitted to patentably define over any permissible combination of Cohen, Jenkins and Knudson as such references fail to teach or suggest the bidirectional electronic mail interaction features set forth by the Applicant in claim 9.

Regarding claim 34, the Examiner contends that sending emails with hotlinks and documents is old as are actions taken after clicking on the hotlink which can be documented by the application which was activated by the hotlink.

The Examiner may be referring to two types of hotlinks, namely, an attachment that requires a software application to open it, and an email address that opens an email address that opens an email compose window. Applicant's emails are responses to notifications and requests. Applicant's system uses emails to send notifications, updates, request for information, etc. The cited references fail to teach or suggest allowing a user to respond to the request with an email. Instead, the cited references require a user to log on to the system, find the pertinent area where the request is located, find the request, and then respond to it.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness in support of a rejection of Applicant's invention defined in claim 34 based on any permissible combination of the teachings of the cited references.

With respect to claim 41, the Examiner contends that Cohen in view of Jenkins and Knudson teaches the capability for providing an electronic notepad for each authorized individual and that providing such a notepad application capability to a user is old and known.

However, the teaching of the any of the cited references which may relate to the taking of personal notes makes such personal notes available to the entire application team. Applicant's electronic notepad as set forth in claim 41, allows each authorized individual to make personal notes about any item of information relating to the project and to attach the personal notes to associated items of information for use and viewing only by the authorized individual who created the personal note. Thus, Applicant's personal notes are not made public to the entire system, but are accessible and usable only by the authorized individual who created the personal note.

Thus, contrary to the Examiner's contention that restricting who can view the content of the notepad is an old and known technology, it is respectfully submitted that Cohen, Jenkins or Knudson fails to supply a basis for such a conclusion. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted

that the Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness to support a rejection of Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 41 based on any permissible combination and interpretation of the cited references.

The Examiner has rejected claim 52 in light of Cohen in view of Jenkins and Knudson based on the unsupported contention that the cited references teach the capability for linking at least two information items of the information modules for bi-directional data navigation between the at least two information items. It is specifically noted that the language in the Office Action used by the Examiner is Applicant's specific language employed in claim 52 and not language from any of the cited references. Such a teaching is lacking in the cited references and the Examiner has not identified any instance in any of the cited references where such linking in different information modules and providing directional data navigation between the at least two information items is taught or suggested.

Accordingly, it is respectfully that Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 52 patentably defines over the cite references and is not taught or suggested by such references taken in any permissible combination.

Regarding claim 53, the Examiner rejects Applicant's invention over the cited references and makes the unsupported contention that the cited references teach the capability for the method steps defined by the Applicant in claim 53. The Examiner has not specifically noted where Cohen, Jenkins or Knudson specifically teaches or suggests the capabilities defined in claim 53.

It is further submitted that Applicant's invention is defined by claim 53 sets forth a unique method sequence in which a project leader defines a plurality of organizational categories which would typically be categories, such as groups, departments, teams, etc., in a company, corporation or other organizational entity. Claim 53 proceeds to specify a request recipient for each defined category for routing a project request for information relating to that respective organizational category.

Therefore it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness to support a rejection of Applicant's invention defined in claim 53.

In regard to claim 54, the Examiner rejects Applicant's invention on the basis of the cited references and states that it is old and known that when a team member goes on vacation, that team member delegates another person to cover their task, and, email applications have the capability for providing email forwarding to designated recipients.

The Examiner, although citing Cohen, Jenkins, and Knudson, fails to specify where in each cited reference the specific method steps set forth by the Applicant in claim 54 are taught or suggested.

Cohen describes rudimentary serial routing in which a user asks a question and sequentially all those named by the user who poses the question will receive the question in serial order. The recipients may approve, reject or add notations. However, this lacks the ability, as set forth by the Applicant in claim 54 to delegate with or without a loop back to the delegator or the ability to route in parallel to multiple individuals.

While delegation as noted by the Examiner is indeed a business practice whether it is for a vacation or for other reasons, delegation within an automated workflow routine as set forth by the Applicant in claim 54 is not. Applicant's delegation method set forth in claim 54 allows an authorized individual to delegate while they are actively working on a project to any number of authorized users instead of to just one recipient only while the person is on vacation or otherwise unable to receive requests. Additionally, Applicant's method allows for delegation where the delegator still maintains final review functionality. Email systems certainly do not provide this functionality.

In view of the more specific definition of Applicant's invention set forth in claim 53, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 53 patentably defines over the cited references taken in any permissible combination.

The Examiner rejects claim 55 over Cohen in view of Jenkins and Knudson on the basis that the references teach the capability for defining at least one of a collaboration purpose, a collaboration action plan and a deadline for the collaboration.

In view of the amendments to claim 1 from which claim 55 depends, it is respectfully that since it has been demonstrated for claim 1 that the cited references are devoid of any teaching or

suggestion of a collaboration to facilitate resolution of one of a project issue or a project problem then the overall scope of a project, such references fail to teach or suggest defining a collaboration purpose, a collaboration action plan and a deadline for the collaboration.

Thus, Applicant's invention set forth in claim 55 is submitted to patentably define over the cited references taken in any permissible combination.

The same arguments set forth with respect to claim 55 are applied to Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 56 and the rejection thereof by the Examiner. The Examiner contends that the cited references teach Applicant's defined capability but fails to specify where such feature are taught or suggested in the cited references.

Accordingly, for this reason it is respectfully submitted that Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 56 patentably defines over the cited references for the same reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1 from which claim 56 indirectly depends.

The Examiner rejects claim 57 in view of the cited references as teaching the capability for each of Applicant's method steps set forth in claim 57. However, the Examiner has again failed to indicate where the cited references specifically teach or suggest each of Applicant's method steps. As set forth above with respect to Applicant's invention in claim 1, the cited references are devoid of any teaching of linking information modules as defined by the Applicant in claim 52 which depends from claim 1.

The cited references are also devoid of any consideration of a project issue. The references have a project plan and tasks associated with the project plan, but are completely devoid of any issues or collaborations that are separate from but integrated with both the project plan and the task list as set forth by the Applicant.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness to support a rejection of Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 57 based on any permissible combination of the cited references.

The Examiner rejects Applicant's invention defined by claim 59 on the basis that the cited references teach the capability for providing a summary view of the information related to the collaboration.

As noted above, with respect to Applicant's invention defined in claim 1, the cited references are devoid of any teaching of establishing a collaboration to facilitate the resolution of a project issue or a project plan. Without any teaching of a collaboration, the cited references cannot be said to teach any type of reporting of a collaboration summary as such references fail to even recognize a collaboration to facilitate resolution of a project issue or project problem.

The cited references may provide the reporting of overall project status and progress reporting. However, such project status and progress reporting are not the same as the summary of the project and a summary review of the information related to a collaboration within the project.

For the reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 59 patentably defines over the cited references in its own right, as well as in view of its dependency from claim 1.

In conclusion, for the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness in support of rejection of Applicant's invention as defined by the claims in light of any permissible combination of Cohen, Jenkins and Knudson. Applicant's invention as defined in all of the pending claims is therefore submitted to patentably define over the cited references. Allowance of all of the claims is therefore, respectfully requested.

Entry of this Amendment under the provisions of Rule 37 CFR 1.116 is submitted to be warranted and is also respectfully requested.

This Amendment is being submitted to address specific grounds for rejection raised by the Examiner for the first time in the "Final" Office Action. The Amendments to certain of the claims more specifically define the features of Applicant's invention and do not introduce new features which have not been previously presented, considered and searched by the Examiner. Since such features have been previously considered and searched by the Examiner, it is respectfully submitted that the Amendments to the claims do not raise new issues which would require undue consideration or further search by the Examiner.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that this Amendment meets all of the requirements for entry of the Amendment after a "Final" Office Action; which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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